

REMARKS

The present Amendment amends the first line of the specification so as to contain a reference that the present application claims the benefit of priority of PCT Application PCT/JP98/02176 filed on May 18, 1998 in Japan. In addition, filed on even date herewith is a Supplemental Declaration in which a claim for priority to the PCT Application is set forth.

Entry of the present Amendment and Supplemental Declaration is respectfully requested.

The above-described amendment to the specification and the filing of the Supplemental Declaration overcomes the objection raised by the Examiner in the October 21, 2003 Advisory Action and the June 17, 2003 final Office Action. Since the present Amendment and Supplemental Declaration overcomes the only objection outstanding with respect to the present application, Applicants submit that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of the present application based on claims 1-16, 18-31, 36-39, 41 and 42 is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (referencing attorney docket no. 500.38711X00).

Respectfully submitted,

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